

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 04333 271001Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01
/070 W

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O R 270737Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2175
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
CINCPAC
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMCONGEN HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, IN
SUBJECT: DESAI DISTRIBUTES PORTFOLIOS; VAJPAYEE TO BE FOREIGN
MINISTER; RAM STILL HOLDING OUT

1. LATE IN THE EVENING OF MARCH 26, THE ACTING PRESIDENT'S
OFFICE ANNOUNCED THE ALLOCATION OF MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS AMONG
THE 14 MEMBERS OF PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S CABINET WHO WERE SWORN
IN EARLIER IN THE DAY. THESE ARE:

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(A) CHARAN SINGH: HOME AFFAIRS
(B) L. K. ADVANI: INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
(C) PRAKASH SINGH BADAL: COMMUNICATIONS
(D) SIKANDAR BAKHT: WORKS, HOUSING AND SUPPLY AND REHABILI-
TATION
(E) SHANTI BHUSHAN: LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS
(F) DR.P.C. CHUNDER: EDUCATION, SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOP-

MENT OF CULTURE

(G) MADHU DANDAVATE: RAILWAYS
(H) MOHAN DHARIA: COMMERCE AND CIVIL SUPPLIES AND COOPERATION
(I) PURUSHOTTAM KAUSHIK: TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION
(J) H.M. PATEL: FINANCE, DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE AND BANKING
(K) BIJU PATNAIK: STEEL AND MINES
(I) P. RAMACHANDRAN: ENERGY
(M) ATAL BEHARI VAJPAYEE: EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(N) RAVINDRA VARMA: PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND LABOR

2. SEVERAL MAJOR PORTFOLIOS (DEFENSE, INDUSTRIES, AGRICULTURE, AND IRRIGATION AMONG OTHERS) WERE NOT ALLOCATED AND ARE PRESUMABLY BEING KEPT IN RESERVE IN CASE THE ON-GOING EFFORTS TO INDUCE JAGJIVAN RAM AND H.N. BAHUGUNA INTO THE CABINET ARE SUCCESSFUL. FOR THE MOMENT, PM DESAI WILL BE INTSB CDCQT OF THESE PORTFOLIOS.

3. CONCERNING THE ABSENTEES AT THE MARCH 26 SWEARING-IN CEREMONY, IT NOW APPEARS THAT THE RELUCTANT RAJ NARAIN HAS BEEN PERSUADED TO JOIN THE CABINET AFTER ALL (REPORTEDLY IN DEFERENCE TO THE WISHES OF J.P. NARAYAN AND OTHERS) AND THAT HE WILL BE SWORN IN MARCH 28. ANOTHER RELUCTANT JANATA NOMINEE, BRIJ LAL VARMA (WHO WAS NAMED AT THE LAST MINUTE TO REPLACE NANAJI DESHMUKH, WHO DECLINED TO ACCEPT A MINISTERIAL POST), MAY ALSO BE SWORN IN MARCH 28 AND GIVEN A PORTFOLIO. THE LAST RELUCTANT JANATA MAN, GEORGE FERNANDES, WAS BESEIGED BY ANGRY SUPPORTERS FOR OVER TWO HOURS ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 26 WHO INSISTED THAT HE ACCEPT HIS RESPONSIBILITY AND JOIN THE CABINET. HE SAID THAT HE WAS PART AND PARCEL OF THE JANATA PARTY, THAT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MORARJI DESAI WAS HIS LEADER AND THAT NO ONE WOULD BE ALLOWED TO TOPPLE THE NEW GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH HE ADDED HE HAD NEVER WANTED TO BE A MINISTER. MEANWHILE, THE GOVT ON MARCH 26 WITHDREW THE CHARGES AGAINST FERNANDES AND THE OTHER ACCUSED IN THE BARODA DYNAMITE CASE.

4. THE TWO PRIME HOLD-OUTS, CFD LEADERS RAM AND BAHUGUNA, CONTINUE THEIR ADMANT STAND ON NON-PARTICIPATION IN THE CABINET. J.P. NARAYAN ISSUED AN "IMPASSIONED APPEAL" TO RAM TO JOIN THE GOVT IN THE GREATER INTERESTS OF "BUILDING A NEW INDIA". THE INTENSE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN RAM, DESAI AND CHARAN SINGH ARE CONTINUING, AND RAM AND BAHUGUNA HAVE SUMMONED CFD MPS AND THE PARTY'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE TO MEET ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 27 TO MAKE A FINAL DECISION. SOME OBSERVERS SPECULATE THAT J.P.'S APPEAL FROM HIS HOSPITAL BED IN BOMBAY, WHERE HE IS UNDERGOING TREATMENT, MAY ULTIMATELY PERSUADE RAM TO JOIN THE CABINET. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT IN ALL THIS MANEUVERING, RAM HAS NEVER SAID HE WOULD NOT CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE JANATA GOVERNMENT SCHNEIDER

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition History: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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